

My name is Fran Berger and I am Chair of the Broadband Monitoring Committee, created by the Brookline Board of Selectmen in 1984 and charged with monitoring license compliance of the cable companies that serve Brookline.

For the past 22 years, the Town and our committee have taken that role very seriously, meeting on a regular basis in open meeting, most times with representatives from the cable companies present and having our minutes posted on the Monitoring Committee's Web site.

During that time, our Ombudsman, Stephen Bressler has recorded the hundreds and hundreds of comments, complaints and inquiries from residents and businesses that have come into the Monitoring Committee office and which have been referred to him by various state representatives, the Selectmen's Office and other Town offices and by numerous Town Meeting Members. Each has been forwarded to the cable companies and they have been held to answers as required by the terms of their respective licenses.

Likewise, through close scrutiny by the Monitoring Committee and frequent interaction between the Town and the cable companies, Brookline has been able to monitor license compliance, ask for remedies and if they don't come to pass, the Committee has recommended to the Board of Selectmen that breach letters be issued and that the companies work to cure the breaches.

During the past two decades this relationship has served the residents of Brookline well, even resulting in the denial of the renewal of Comcast's license last year and subsequent renewal this summer.

To shorten the licensing period to 90 days would render municipal licensing ineffectual. Decades of experience has shown that the close relationship that the Town of Brookline has with its two cable franchises has had a very strong impact on the manner in which the residents of Brookline are served. We know from experience that constant vigilance and the investment in time to do it correctly, is what assures that our residents – the cable companies' customers - are provided top-level service.

We strongly oppose the Verizon proposal to reduce competitive cable licensing to 90 days.